Himesama no Yurikago

By YACHI

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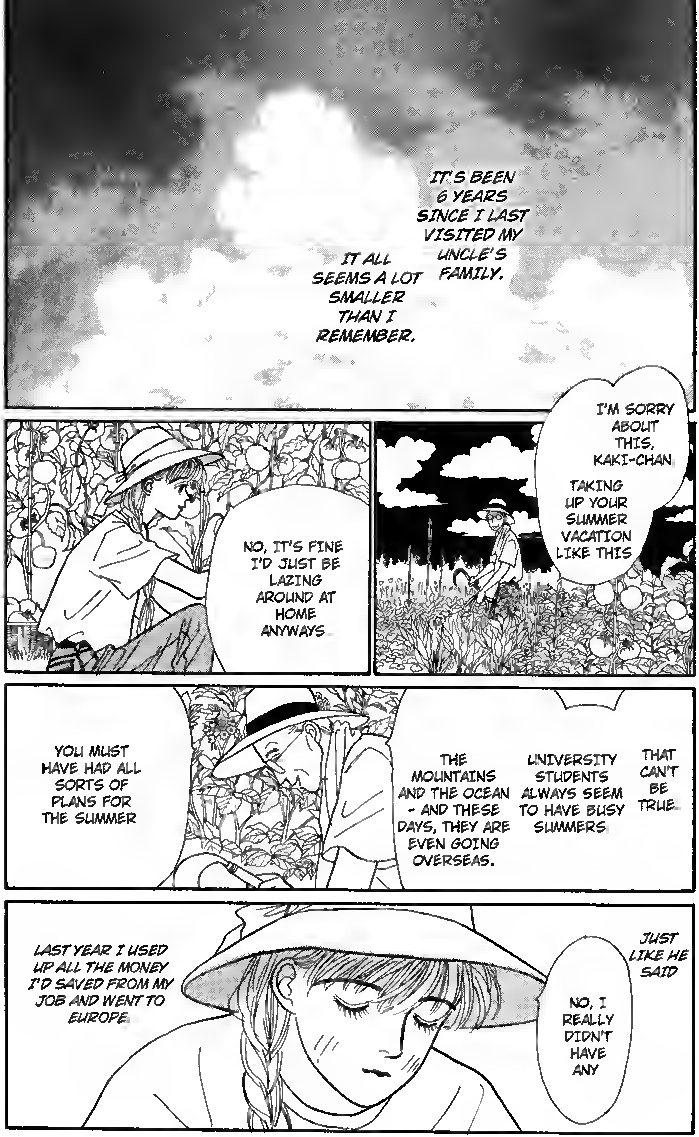
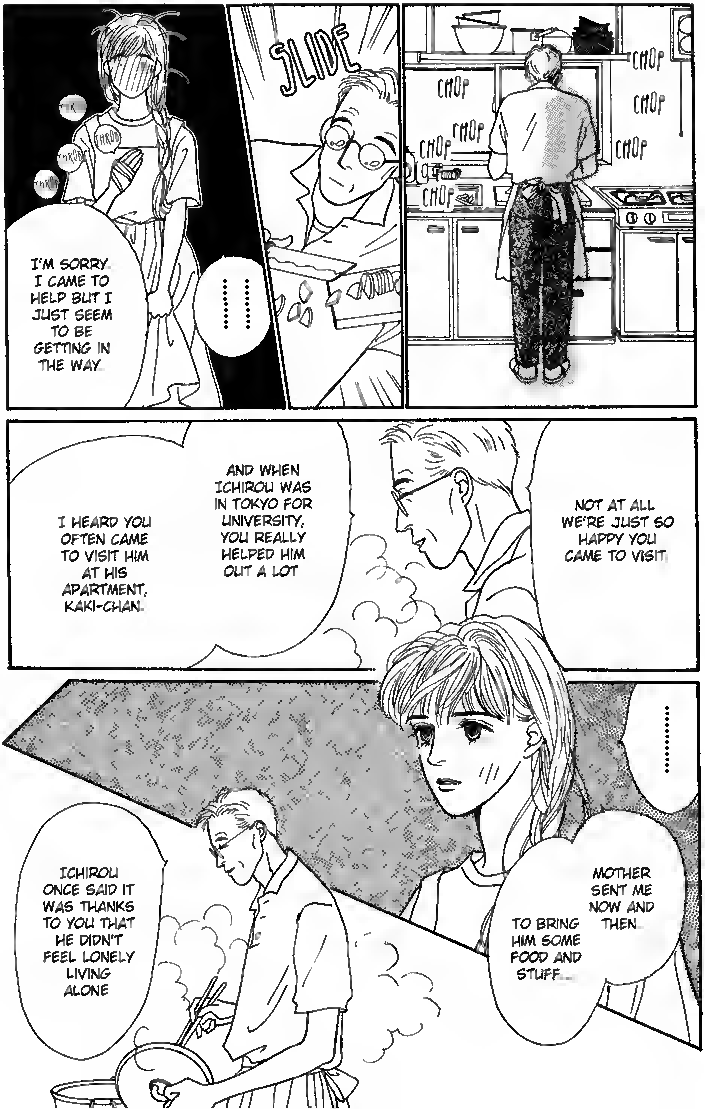
WingtipCafe.com

とおくとおくの夏の国
THAT DISTANT
SUMMER COUNTRY

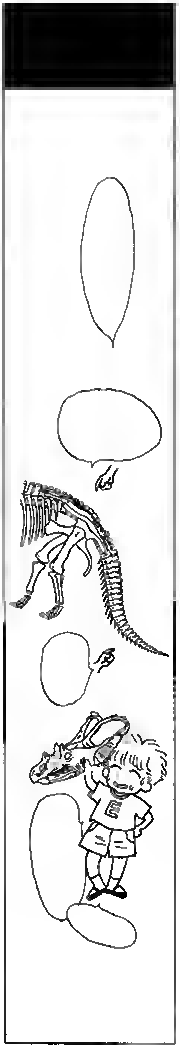

IT'S BEEN 6 YEARS SINCE I LAST VISITED MY UNCLE'S FAMILY.
IT ALL SEEMS A LOT SMALLER THAN I REMEMBER.
I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, KAKI-CHAN. TAKING UP YOUR SUMMER VACATION LIKE THIS
NO, IT'S FINE I'D JUST BE LAZING AROUND AT HOME ANYWAYS
YOU MUST HAVE HAD ALL SORTS OF PLANS FOR THE SUMMER
THE MOUNTAINS AND THE OCEAN - AND THESE DAYS, THEY ARE EVEN GOING OVERSEAS.
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ALWAYS SEEM TO HAVE BUSY SUMMERS
THAT CAN'T BE TRUE
LAST YEAR I USED UP ALL THE MONEY I'D SAVED FROM MY JOB AND WENT TO EUROPE
NO, I REALLY DIDN'T HAVE ANY
JUST LIKE HE SAID

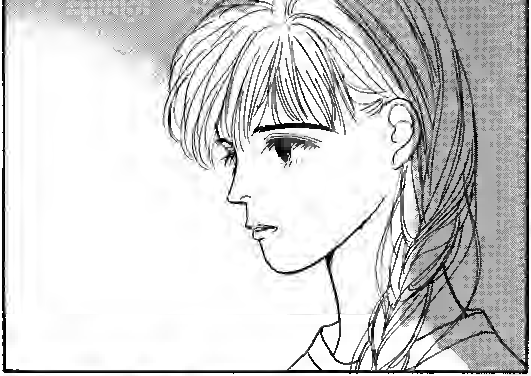
BUT SHE WAS REALLY OVERJOYED THAT YOU CAME TO SEE HER, KAKI-CHAN
YEAH. REALLY, AT OUR AGE, YOU JUST CAN'T TAKE RHEUMATISM LIGHTLY.
I'M GLAD IT WASN'T ANYTHING SERIOUS
IT SEEMS LIKE AUNTY WILL BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL NEXT MONTH.
drop
You must be so popular at school. I'm sure it's troubling
No I'm not. Not at all
I DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE YOU AT FIRST
YOU'VE REALLY BECOME A BEAUTY SINCE LAST WE SAW YOU.
pick
pick
KYAAA
WHAT'S WRONG !?
KYAA
KYAAA
BUGS! A GIANT CATER-PILLAR!!
B... BUGS!!

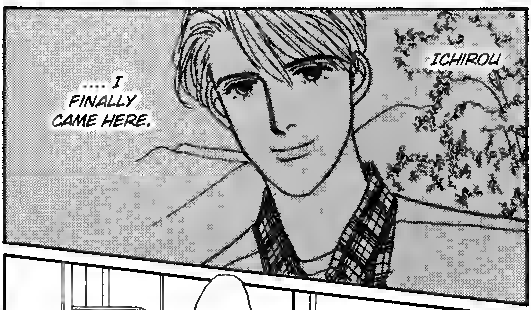
CHOP
CHOP
IT LOOKED SO BIG, THOUGH
HAHAHA - BUT TO GET SCARED OVER THAT LITTLE BUG YOU REALLY ARE A CITY GIRL
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THERE ARE STILL PLENTY MORE
... I'M SORRY I STEPPED ON THOSE TOMATOES I PICKED
CHOP
CHOP
IT WILL BE READY SOON, SO JUST SIT DOWN AND HAVE A BEER OR SOMETHING-
NO, THAT'S OK
CAN I HELP WITH SOMETHING?
KAKI-CHAN
HOT
KYA
A
AH THE NABE!
PSSHHHH
OH LET'S SEE, BEER BEER...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, I CAN-

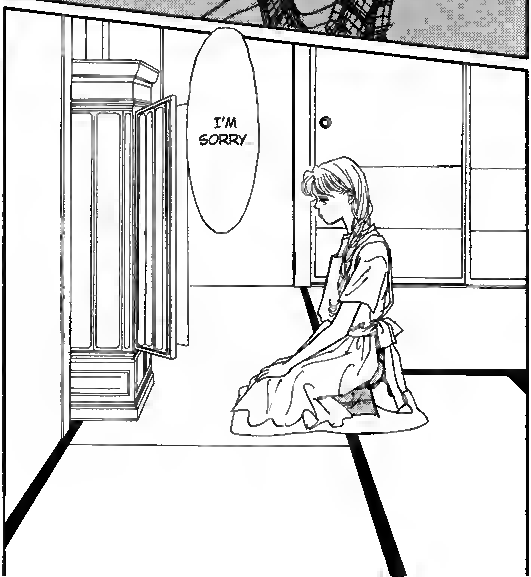

I'M SORRY. I CAME TO HELP BUT I JUST SEEM TO BE GETTING IN THE WAY.
……
SLICE
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
NOT AT ALL WE'RE JUST SO HAPPY YOU CAME TO VISIT.
AND WHEN ICHIROU WAS IN TOKYO FOR UNIVERSITY, YOU REALLY HELPED HIM OUT A LOT
I HEARD YOU OFTEN CAME TO VISIT HIM AT HIS APARTMENT, KAKI-CHAN.
……
MOTHER SENT ME NOW AND THEN… TO BRING HIM SOME FOOD AND STUFF…
ICHIROU ONCE SAID IT WAS THANKS TO YOU THAT HE DIDN'T FEEL LONELY LIVING ALONE

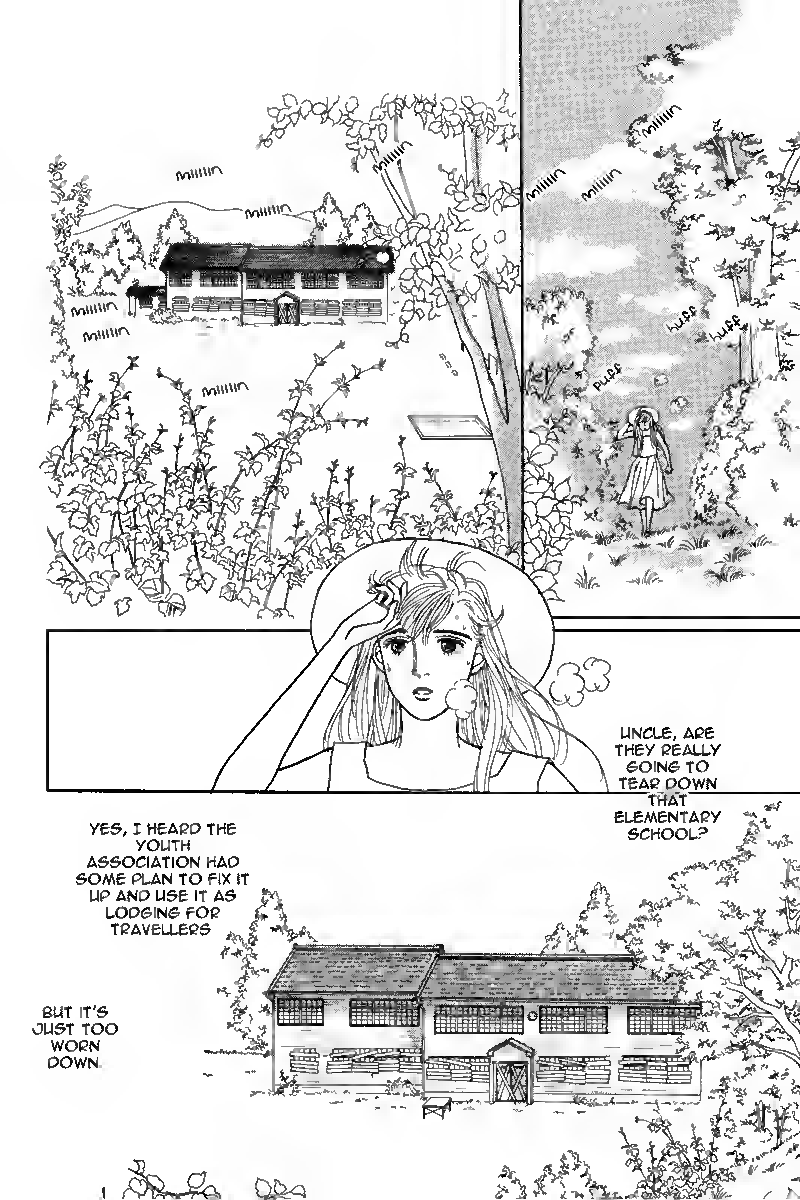
TO ICHIROU
KAKI-CHAN, TAKE THIS TO HIM.
HUH?

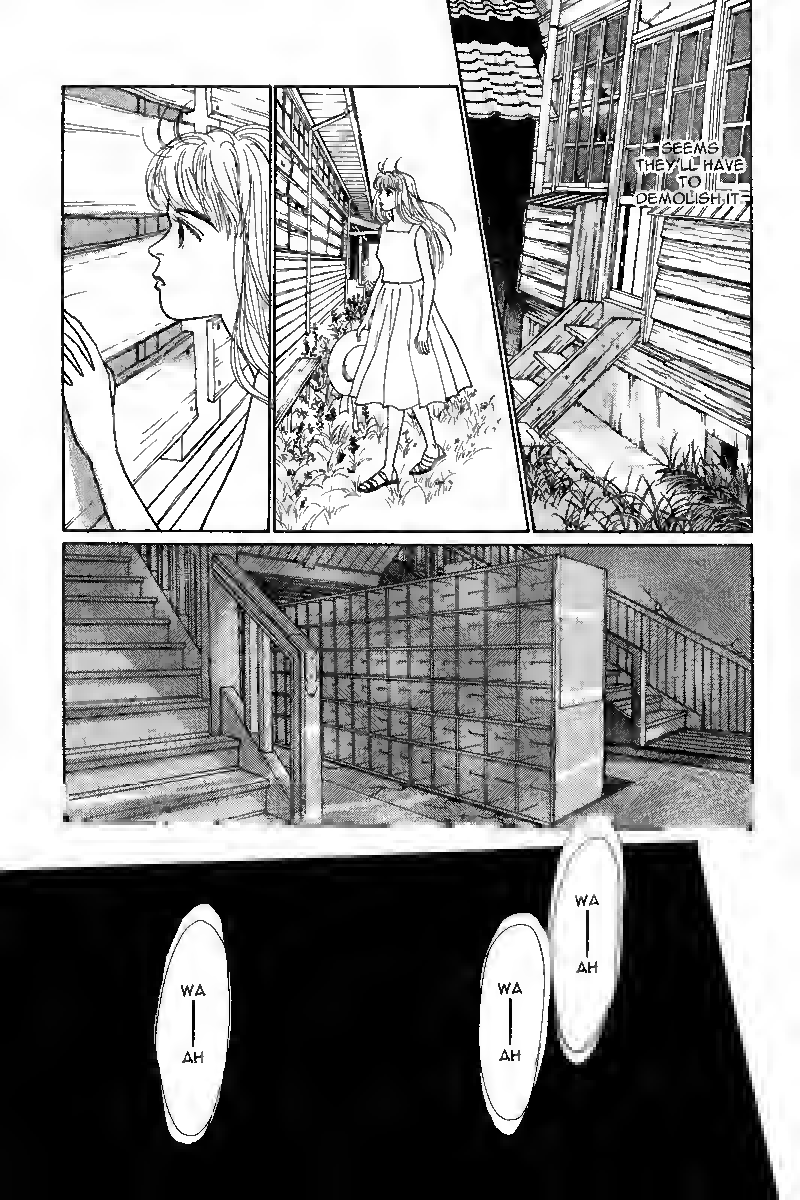




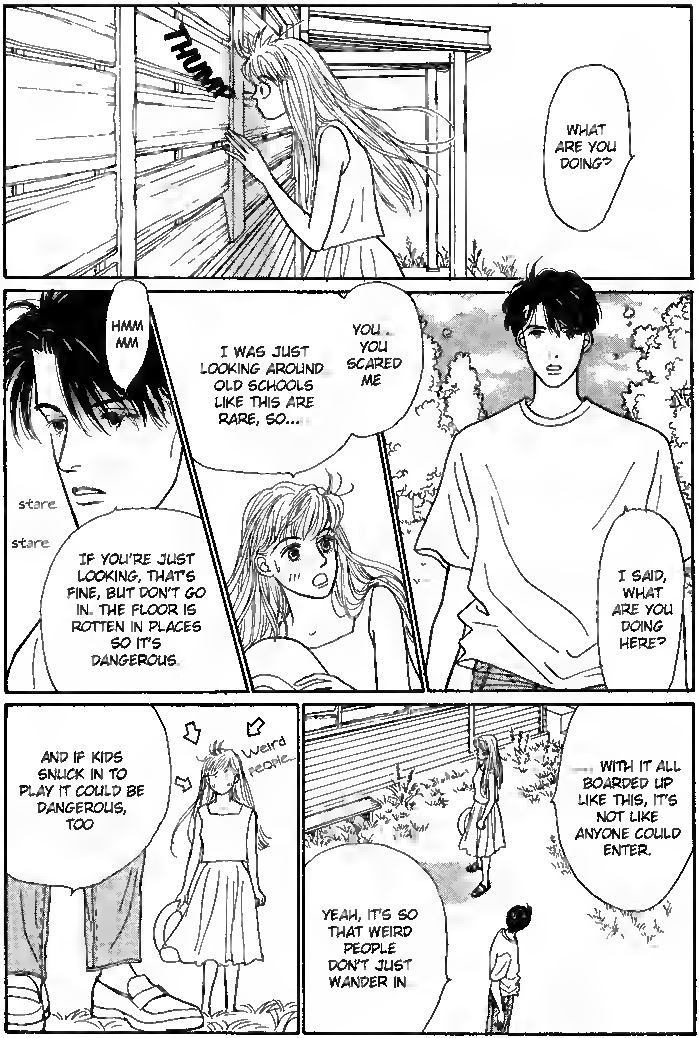

ICHIROU
.... I FINALLY CAME HERE.

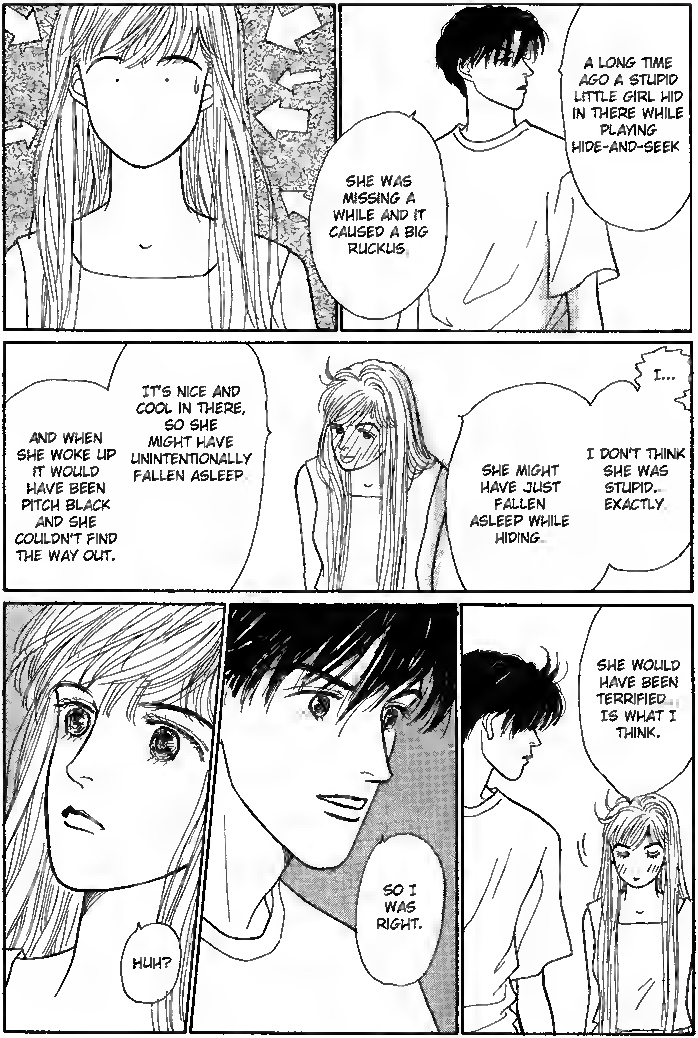

I'M SORRY


UNCLE, ARE THEY REALLY GOING TO TEAR DOWN THAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?
YES, I HEARD THE YOUTH ASSOCIATION HAD SOME PLAN TO FIX IT UP AND USE IT AS LODGING FOR TRAVELLERS
BUT IT'S JUST TOO WORN DOWN.

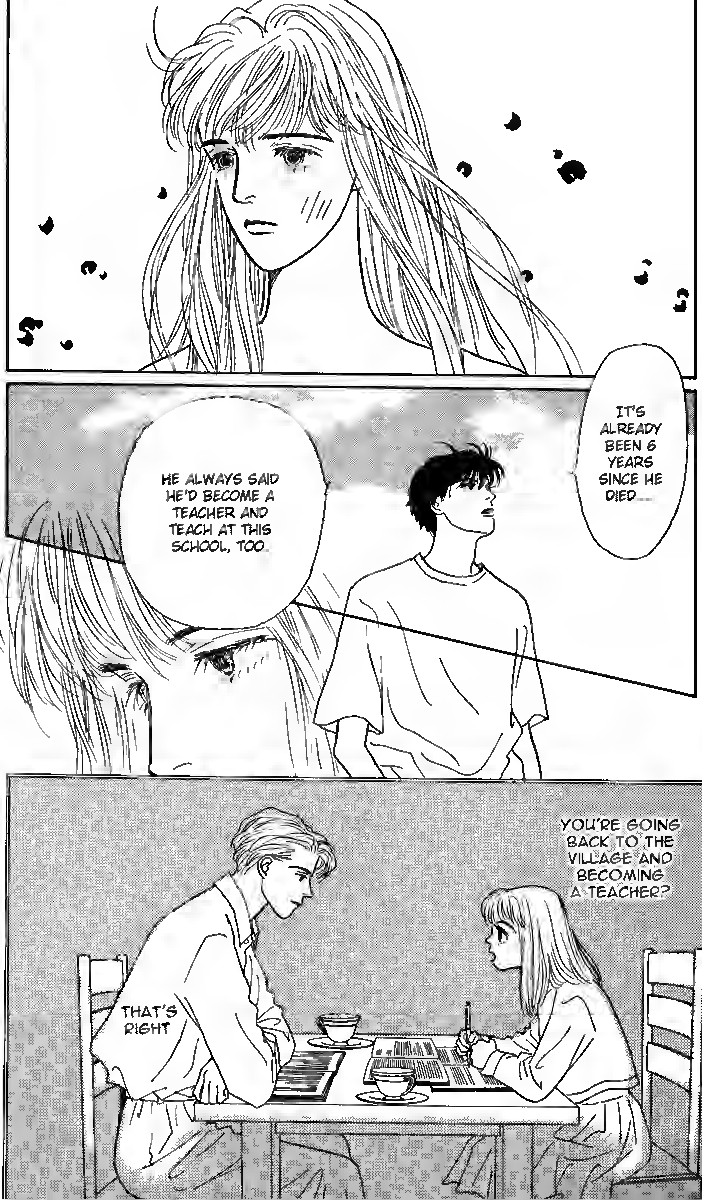

SEEMS THEY'LL HAVE TO DEMOLISH IT
WA—AH
WA—AH
WA—AH

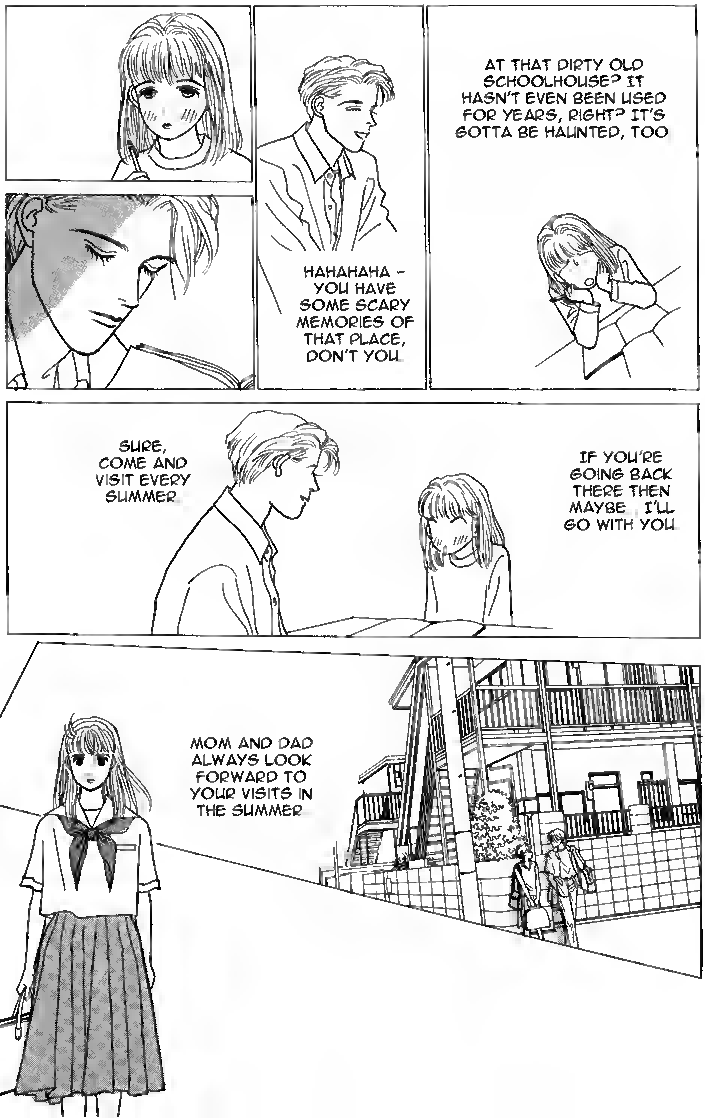
BROTHER ICHIROU
WA——AH
KAKI?
KAKI-CHAN


THUMP
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HMM MM
I WAS JUST LOOKING AROUND OLD SCHOOLS LIKE THIS ARE RARE, SO...
YOU... YOU SCARED ME
stare
stare
IF YOU'RE JUST LOOKING, THAT'S FINE, BUT DON'T GO IN. THE FLOOR IS ROTTEN IN PLACES SO IT'S DANGEROUS.
I SAID, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
AND IF KIDS SNUCK IN TO PLAY IT COULD BE DANGEROUS, TOO
Weird people...
YEAH, IT'S SO THAT WEIRD PEOPLE DON'T JUST WANDER IN.
...WITH IT ALL BOARDED UP LIKE THIS, IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE COULD ENTER.

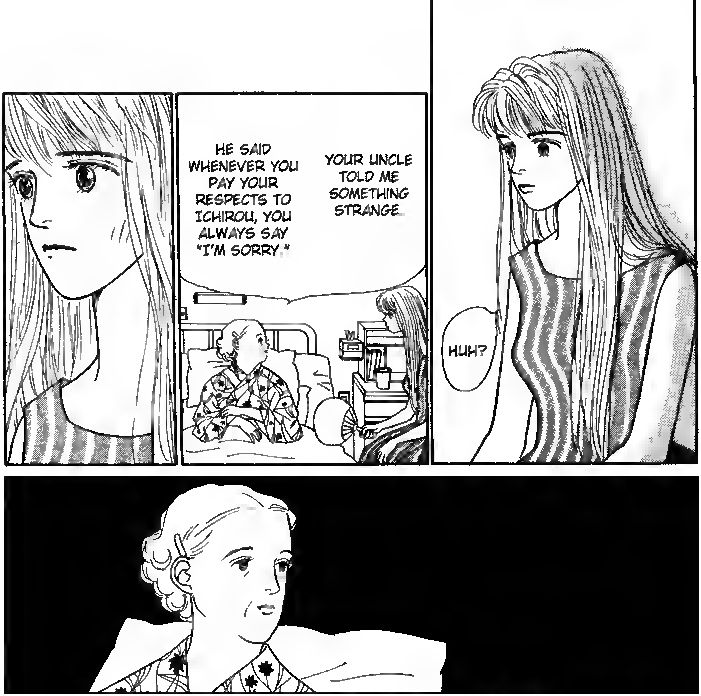

A LONG TIME AGO A STUPID LITTLE GIRL HID IN THERE WHILE PLAYING HIDE-AND-SEEK
SHE WAS MISSING A WHILE AND IT CAUSED A BIG RUCKUS.
I...
I DON'T THINK SHE WAS STUPID. EXACTLY.
SHE MIGHT HAVE JUST FALLEN ASLEEP WHILE HIDING.
IT'S NICE AND COOL IN THERE, SO SHE MIGHT HAVE UNINTENTIONALLY FALLEN ASLEEP.
AND WHEN SHE WOKE UP IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PITCH BLACK AND SHE COULDN'T FIND THE WAY OUT.
SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN TERRIFIED. IS WHAT I THINK.
SO I WAS RIGHT.
HUH?

.....?
GUESS NOT, HUH.
I WAS ONE OF THE KIDS FROM THE VILLAGE YOU USED TO PLAY WITH.
I WONDER IF YOU STILL REMEMBER ME.
YOU'RE THE GIRL FROM THAT TIME, RIGHT? YOU CAME TO ISHIWADA ICHIROU-SAN'S PLACE EVERY YEAR
STUCK TO...
THAT'S NOT...
YOU WERE ALWAYS STUCK TO ICHIROU LIKE GLUE, FOLLOWING HIM AROUND EVERYWHERE
YOU WERE ALWAYS ALL "ICHIROU ICHIROU".
HAHAHA
BUT IT'S TRUE. AFTER ICHIROU-SAN DIED IN THE MOUNTAINS, YOU COMPLETELY STOPPED COMING HERE


IT'S ALREADY BEEN 6 YEARS SINCE HE DIED...
HE ALWAYS SAID HE'D BECOME A TEACHER AND TEACH AT THIS SCHOOL, TOO.
YOU'RE GOING BACK TO THE VILLAGE AND BECOMING A TEACHER?
THAT'S RIGHT


HAHAHAHA - YOU HAVE SOME SCARY MEMORIES OF THAT PLACE, DON'T YOU
AT THAT DIRTY OLD SCHOOLHOUSE? IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN USED FOR YEARS, RIGHT? IT'S GOTTA BE HAUNTED, TOO
SURE, COME AND VISIT EVERY SUMMER
IF YOU'RE GOING BACK THERE THEN MAYBE I'LL GO WITH YOU
MOM AND DAD ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR VISITS IN THE SUMMER

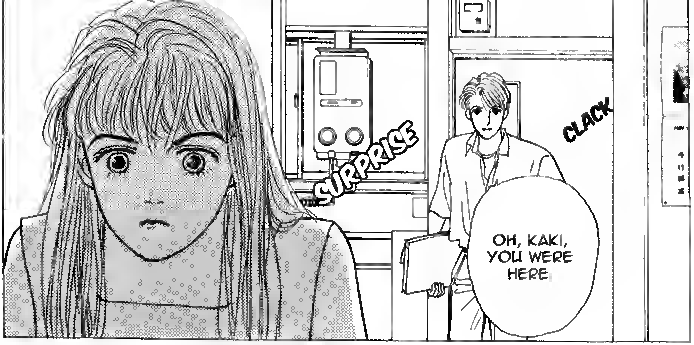
DON'T BRING THAT PERSON THERE.

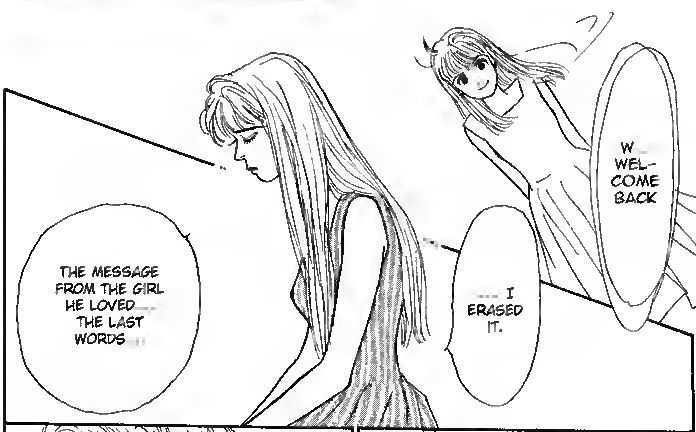

HUH?
YOUR UNCLE TOLD ME SOMETHING STRANGE.
HE SAID WHENEVER YOU PAY YOUR RESPECTS TO ICHIROU, YOU ALWAYS SAY "I'M SORRY."

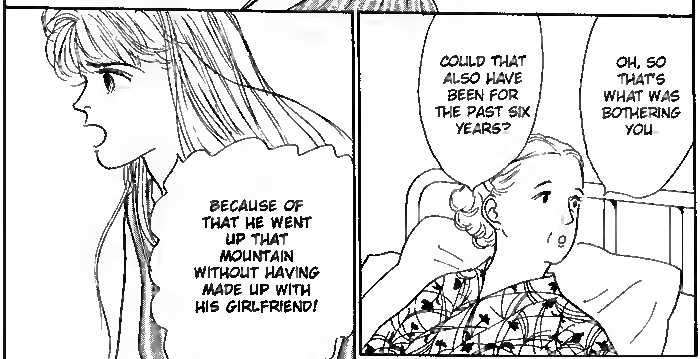
I....
THE TAPE...
THE TAPE FOR THE ANSWERING MACHINE.

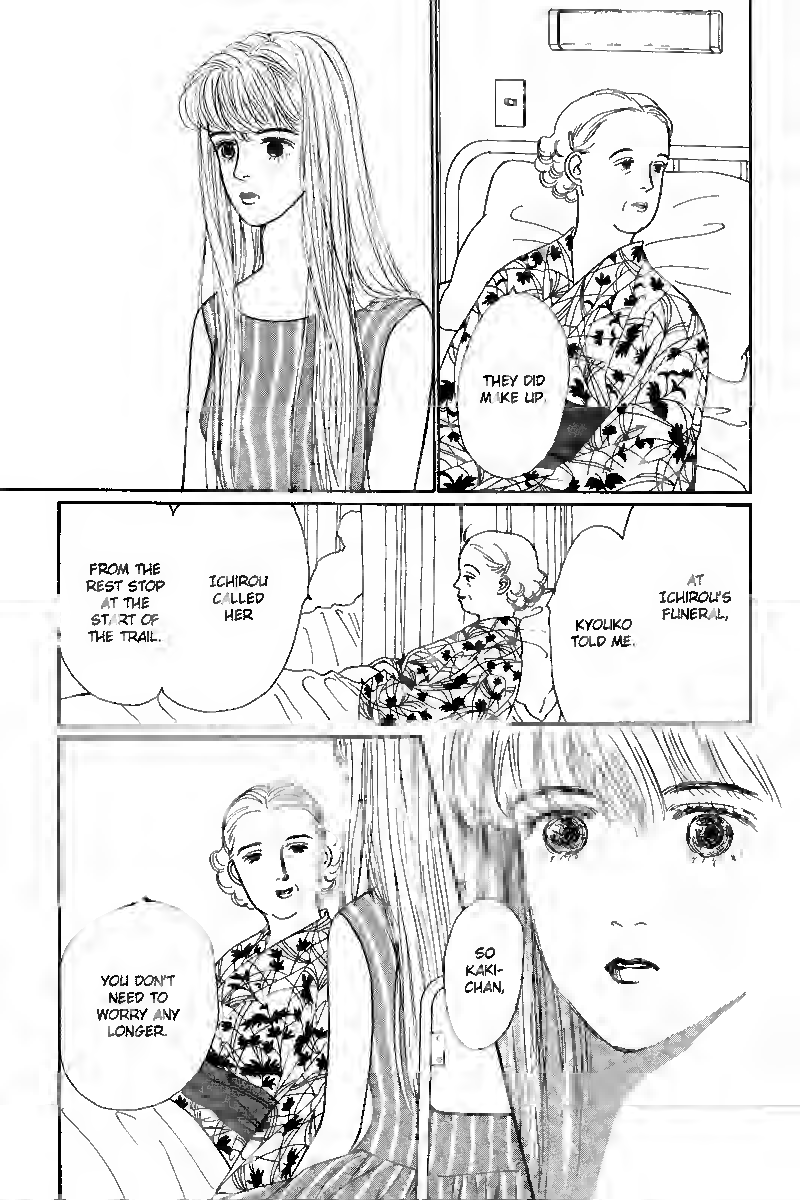
I ERASED IT
HE'S REALLY LATE
HE SAID HE'D BE HOME EARLY TODAY SINCE TOMORROW HE'LL BE OUT CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN
HEHE SUCH A BLUNT MESSAGE IT'S JUST LIKE HIM
BE EP
CLICK
ISHIWADA ICHIROU IS NOT AVAILABLE IF YOU HAVE ANY BUSINESS, LEAVE A MESSAGE
RRR
ICHIROU-SAN
IT'S ME... KYOUKO
I'M REALLY, TRULY SORRY...
I'M SORRY
IT REALLY WAS MY FAULT I WAS BEING STUBBORN AND...
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT A LOT AFTER THAT...

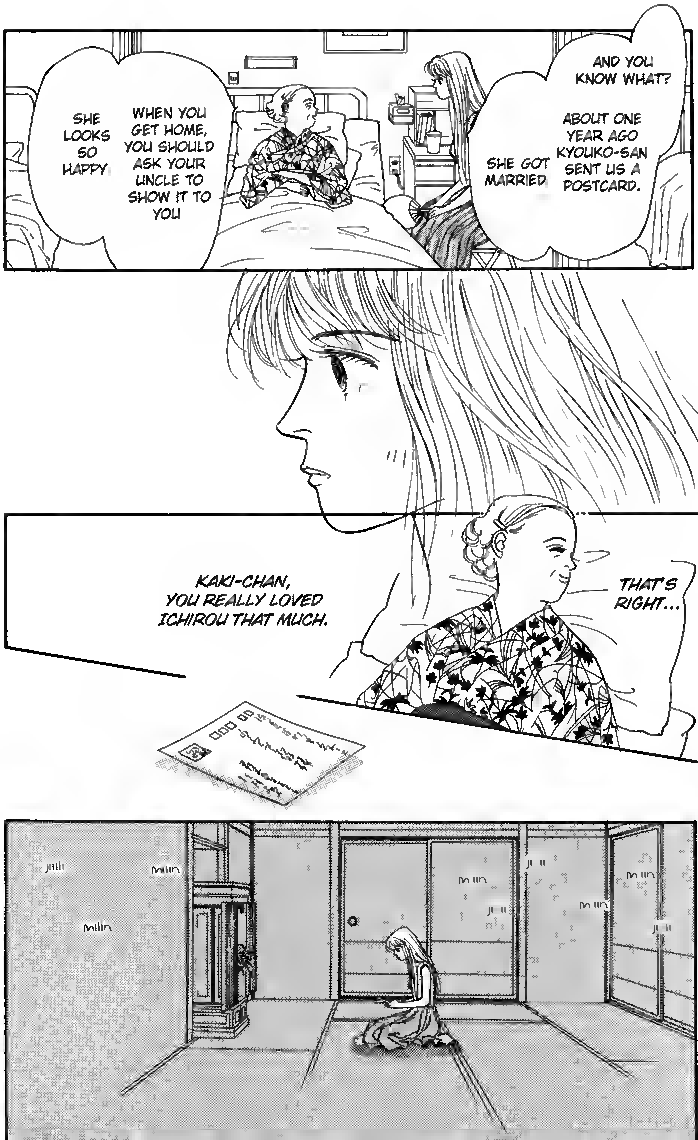
I WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT BEFORE YOU WENT OFF MOUNTAIN-CLIMBING
WHEN YOU GET BACK, LIKE WE PROMISED,
LET'S GO VISIT YOUR VILLAGE
SO PLEASE
BE CAREFUL
CLICK
CLICK
BEEP BEEP
CLICK
CLICK
mss


SURPRISE
CLACK
OH, KAKI, YOU WERE HERE


W... WEL-COME BACK
... I ERASED IT.
THE MESSAGE FROM THE GIRL HE LOVED... THE LAST WORDS...

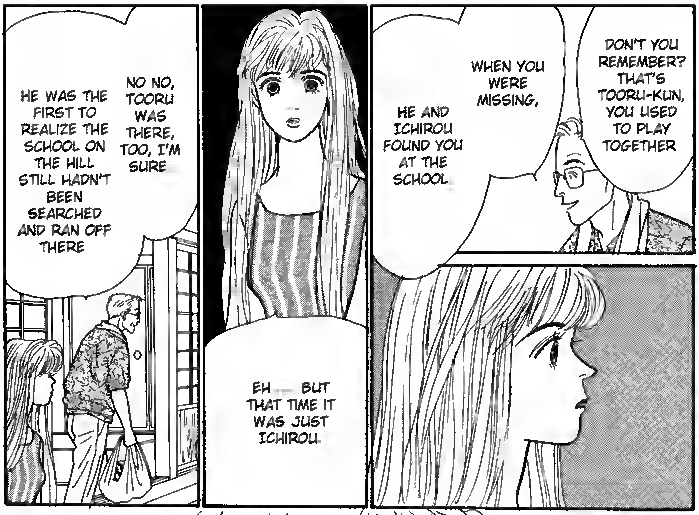

OH, SO THAT'S WHAT WAS BOTHERING YOU...
COULD THAT ALSO HAVE BEEN FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS?
BECAUSE OF THAT HE WENT UP THAT MOUNTAIN WITHOUT HAVING MADE UP WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND!

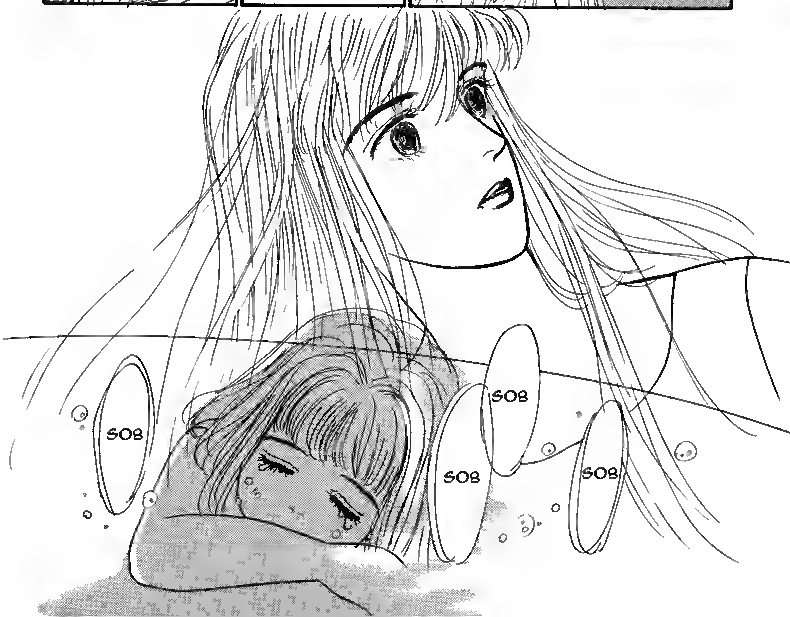

THEY DID MAKE UP.
AT ICHIROU'S FUNERAL, KYOUKO TOLD ME.
ICHIROU CALLED HER FROM THE REST STOP AT THE START OF THE TRAIL.
SO KAKI-CHAN,
YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ANY LONGER.

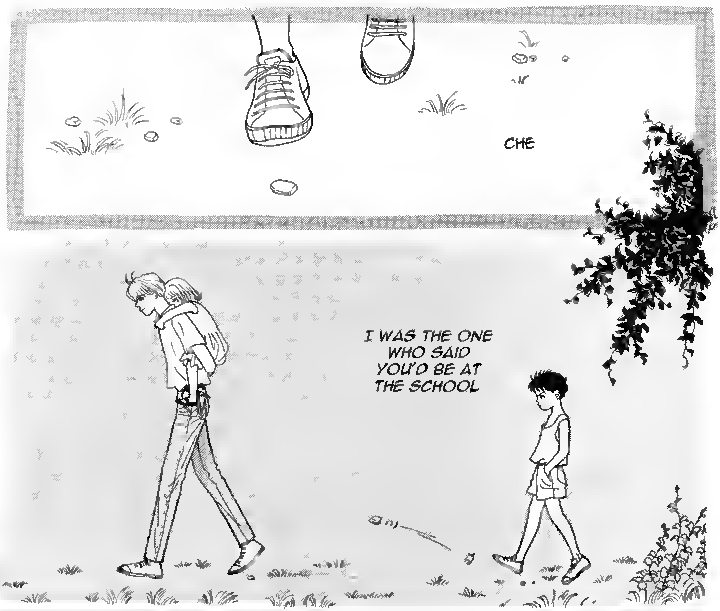

AND YOU KNOW WHAT?
ABOUT ONE YEAR AGO KYOUKO-SAN SENT US A POSTCARD.
SHE GOT MARRIED
WHEN YOU GET HOME, YOU SHOULD ASK YOUR UNCLE TO SHOW IT TO YOU
SHE LOOKS SO HAPPY
THAT'S RIGHT...
KAKI-CHAN, YOU REALLY LOVED ICHIROU THAT MUCH.

GOOD AFTERNOON, SIR
AH
HEY, IS ISHIWADA-SAN IN?
HE'S JUST OUT BACK AT THE MOMENT
OH, NO NEED TO CALL HIM MY MOM JUST TOLD ME TO BRING THESE OVER
THUMP
LATER
THEY'RE WATER-MELONS WE GREW
WHAT'S THIS?
OH, THAT WAS THE KAKIZAKI FAMILY'S THIRD SON, WASN'T IT?
HE BROUGHT US SOME WATERMELONS
Oh, there are peaches too
HE MUST HAVE COME TO CHECK THINGS OUT SINCE YOU'RE HERE
HAHAHA

[Note "You are" sounds stilted between family members, "you re" is better here]


DON'T YOU REMEMBER? THAT'S TOORU-KUN, YOU USED TO PLAY TOGETHER
WHEN YOU WERE MISSING,
HE AND ICHIROU FOUND YOU AT THE SCHOOL
EH—— BUT THAT TIME IT WAS JUST ICHIROU
NO NO, TOORU WAS THERE, TOO, I'M SURE
HE WAS THE FIRST TO REALIZE THE SCHOOL ON THE HILL STILL HADN'T BEEN SEARCHED AND RAN OFF THERE


SOB
SOB
SOB
SOB



THAT DISTANT SUMMER COUNTRY - END -